

Hinds and Haunches



Individual Venison Pies



Serves 6

1oz butter

1 tablespoon olive oil 1lb 12oz venison casserole or chunked steak

1 medium onion sliced 8oz smoked bacon lardons

2 tablespoons plain flour 75ml sloe gin

750ml hot chicken stock 12 juniper berries, lightly crushed

2 thyme sprigs 1 bay leaf

2 pieces orange peel 7oz ready-rolled puff pastry

250g pack whole cooked chestnuts

1 medium egg, beaten

1. Preheat oven to 170C (150C fan) mark 3. Put the butter and oil in an ovenproof casserole. Fry the venison in batches over a medium heat until browned. Set aside.
2. Gently cook onion in same pan for 10 min until softened. Add the lardons and fry to release the fat, then turn up the heat. Cook for 2-3min until golden. Stir in flour and cook for 1min.
3. Gradually stir in the gin and stock.
4. Return meat to casserole, with juniper berries, thyme, bay leaf and orange peel. Season, cover and bring to the boil, then cook in oven for 1 ¾ hours.
5. Roll out pastry to thickness of a £1 coin and cut into six 10cm (4in) circles. Put on a baking sheet, prick all over with a fork, cover with clingfilm and chill for 30 min.
6. Add chestnuts to casserole and cook for 15min, with the lid off, until the meat is tender. Check seasoning and keep warm.
7. Turn oven up to 200C (180C fan) mark 6. Brush pastry with egg. Bake for 10-12 min until golden and risen. Serve spoonfuls of the casserole topped with puff pastry lids